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The Ideology of the *Lai De Doon*

Ross G. Arthur

The *Lai de Doon*[1] is not only "minor" but practically unknown. The reasons for this obscurity are not hard to find. It is a "Breton *lai*," a member of a genre whose defining characteristics and standards of excellence have been established by the critical examination of the *lais* of Marie de France, which reveal a sensitivity to Celtic mystery, embody serious archetypal truths, display rhetorical brilliance and are unified around the themes of ideal love and perfect knighthood. *Doon*, like most other anonymous *lais*, has been deemed imperfect in all of these areas.

It comes close, in fact, to being a limit case, falling in every possible way to meet the expectations of the modern critical tradition. It is "unworthy of Marie de France."[2] It presents "une version si édulcorée et abatârdie [*sic*] du mythe qu'elle en devient presque méconaissable."[3] Its plot is a clumsy combination of misunderstood Celtic motifs which have nothing to do with each other.[4] The hero acts "for no good reason at all" (Donovan, p. 73). The poet has no talent and no interest in "la signification profonde de son recit" (Tobin, p. 324). Worst of all, his poem is infected with "realism": his sources must have included both a "fairy lover" and a "fairy mistress," but he did not recognize them as such and so, by default, gives us only a man and a woman (Tobin, pp. 322-23). The result is a failure to observe the most important rule of the genre: "Love, which should be prominent" (Donovan, pp. 73-74), is not.

In many other scholarly fields, the complete "failure" of a work to live up to the generic standards established be the critics would lead to a re-evaluation of those standards, or at least to a recognition that they are inappropriate in this particular case.[5] In the following pages, I will be arguing that the *Doon*-poet's divergences from modern expectations are systematic, that each of them is fully comprehensible in terms of twelfth- and thirteenth-century literary conventions and modes of composition, and that the coherence of the poem is derived not from a concern with the individual psychology of its characters or from traces of a lost Celtic source, but from the poet's response to the social circumstances of his intended audience. *Doon* does not attempt to do what *Lanval* or any of Marie's other lais has done, and the *Doon*-poet does not share Marie's view of their society; the real difficulty with reading the *Lai de Doon* is that it is unquestioningly and

insidiously supportive of an ideological framework we prefer to see subverted.[6]

In a brief prologue, the poet says that every good harpist knows the melody called "Doon," but he will tell us the *aventure* which gave rise to it. There was once an heiress who was rich, powerful and proud. Disdaining all men, no matter how worthy, she refused to enter servitude on the pretext of marriage. Under pressure from her vassals, she consents to take a husband, but she imposes a condition: she will only marry a man who can ride from Southampton to Edinburgh in a single day. Many men try, and a few succeed. When they complete their journey, exhausted, they are sent to sleep in a soft bed in her chambers. There, much to her pleasure, they die.

In Brittany, a hardy knight named Doon hears of this maiden and decides to undertake the task. When he completes the journey, he enters the maiden's chamber but he stays awake until the dawn, and he does not die. He asks for his promised reward, but she tells him that he must first ride as far in a day as a swan can fly. He does so, rests for a while in a convenient castle, and then returns to claim his reward. This time the maiden relents and marries him.

After holding court for three days, Doon announces to his wife that he is leaving, and may never see her again. Despite her tearful protestations, he pauses only long enough to tell her that she is pregnant, and will bear a son. He gives her a gold ring, and tells her to give it to their son and to send him to the King of France when he is grown. Then he returns to Brittany. The promised son arrives, learns to ride and hunt, and then sets out for France with enough gold and silver to ensure popularity. The king makes him a knight, and he makes the rounds of the tournaments with great success.

At a tournament at Mont Saint Michel, after winning every combat he enters, he meets his father and defeats him. Doon asks to see his hands, and recognizes the ring. He reveals his identity and tells his son the story of his marriage, and they are publicly reunited. Then they cross the channel and return to the lady in Edinburgh, where Doon and his wife live out their lives in great honor.

The topics of this poem, like scores of other contemporary works, are the knight's relation to his *métier*, to women, and to other knights: chivalry, love and companionship.[7] Determining what the poem has to say about these three central areas of its audience's concern requires a variety of methods using different sorts of evidence. From time to time, the poet reveals his assumptions about causality with a "por" or a "car," and his logic can be extended to other areas to draw together apparently disparate text facts. The poem is only 286 lines long, so that any trace of redundancy or verbosity is a strong indication of thematic importance. As a heuristic principle, we may make use of *post hoc ergo propter hoc* logic, always useful in

studies of narrative; insights derived in this manner may frequently be validated by comparison with contemporary works which draw on the same stock of motifs. Finally, the complaints of modern critics, the inconsistencies between their complaints, and their distortions of the text in the interest of discovering coherence all point unerringly at those portions of the text which encapsulate the differences between twelfth- and twentieth-century views of the knight and his social environment.

Magic and mystery are systematically excluded from the poem; its situations, characters and events are made similar to, rather than fantastic analogues of, the world of the knight in the audience. The *Doon*-maiden is not an ethereal and munificent fairy living in an eternally feminine otherworld, such as we find in *Lanval*, for example. She is a purely human heiress, and her control over a whole country is a temporary situation; the absence of male authority is seen as a lack to be liquidated. Her castle is called "The Castle of the Maidens" not because of any permanent or essential characteristic, but simply because of her and her damsels. Like any twelfth-century heiress, she must be responsive to the demands of her male vassals. They are the motive force behind her eventual marriage, whereas the fairy mistresses of other poems are moved by love for the young hero. The task the maiden sets for her suitors seems impossible to anyone who knows British geography, but in the world of the poem it is merely difficult, since a number of men are able to perform it. Doon's horse Bayard, despite its magical name, is simply an excellent example of the breed. The maiden's "perilous bed" is not guarded by flying or flaming lances or swords, such as appear in the *Charette* (vv. 514-34)[8] or in *Le Chevalier à l'Épée* (vv. 531-46),[9] but is merely a soft and comfortable place to sleep, dangerous only to those who yield to physical exhaustion. When Doon is sent to the chamber, he asks that dry wood be found and brought to him in the room, he carefully locks the door so that no-one can spy on him, he lights a fire with a flintstone . . . and while we wait for him to perform some arcane apotropaic ritual with analogues in Walter Map or Giraldus Cambrensis, he sits down by the fire to warm himself, and stays awake all night. Once the night has passed, he is even able to get into the bed and sleep, and nothing happens. It would have been simple for the poet to omit the lines which create this "narrative inconsistency," or to create a helpful dwarf or maiden to make Doon's prescience[10] more comprehensible, or to write a couplet explaining that the powers of the bed came from the full moon. Instead, he offers his audience the image of a dutiful and cautious soldier, sticking to his post despite his exhaustion, and then enjoying a brief but well-deserved rest once his watch has passed. Like the journey to Edinburgh, Doon's race with the swan is uneventful and passed over quickly; the ring which his son wears, far from being a magical or even surprising token of identity, merely confirms publicly Doon's private recognition that the young man who

fought so well must be of his own lineage. His return to the kingdom where he will live out his days in prosperity is accomplished by sailing over the English channel, not, as in a *lai féerique*, by riding under it.

Despite their general distaste for such "realism" in matters relating to action, the critics have been unanimous in condemning the poem for its lack of psychological verisimilitude. "Le départ de Doon trois jours après son mariage n'est nullement motivé: il ne sert qu'à rattacher la seconde partie à la première."[11] "[The poet] sometimes fails to assign motives: for no good reason at all Doon departs for Brittany three days after his marriage" (Donovan, p. 73). This incoherence, we are told, is a result of the unconscious and incompetent mixing of disparate Celtic motifs: "Le lai de *Doon* contient . . . l'histoire de la femme orgueilleuse . . . mêlée à la tradition . . . de l'amant surnaturel qui quitte son amie en prédisant la naissance d'un fils" (Tobin, p. 323). Yet this modern desire for motivational consistency extends only so far, only to Doon. The maiden in the poem uses all her resources to resist marriage until v. 160, but then cries and pleads with Doon not to leave (vv. 167-74), laments his departure once he has gone, and loves and desires him greatly, years after he has abandoned her (vv. 277-78); however, no critic has found this far more abrupt and total reversal of attitudes "unmotivated."

The maiden's attitudes and behavior make sense only according to a rather different view of "feminine nature" from that expressed, overtly at least, by the critics. Her actions and emotions, according to this twelfth-century view, are quite natural, or at least "natural under the circumstances." Since she holds her country as her inheritance, she is rich and powerful, and, in the poet's view, *therefore* proud: "por sa richesce s'orgueilli" (v. 18). Her pride manifests itself in several ways. She thinks that marriage is a master-slave relationship, and she refuses to marry: "ne se voloit metre en servage / por achoison de mariage" (vv. 23-24). When she is prevailed upon by her male vassals, she consents, but immediately breaks the spirit of the agreement by imposing excessive demands on her suitors. When even this ploy fails, she further violates her promises, in an even more violent fashion, by causing the death of successful candidates. Her joy, and her feeling of revenge, complete the picture.

Women who threaten suitors with death are not uncommon in medieval texts; the examples which stand out are, not surprisingly, women who are not at the moment under direct male control. The damsel of Gautdestroit in *La Vengeance de Raguidel* (vv. 2279-306)[12] plans to kill Gawain when he puts his neck through an elaborately rigged window which will decapitate him; he has ignored her advances, so she has planned a romantic murder-suicide. Laudine, temporarily the mistress of her castle, points out to a loving and submissive Yvain that she could kill him if she so chose.[13] Brunissen, who has been the undisputed sovereign of Monbrun for a much

longer time, threatens to kill or maim Jaufre simply because he has unwittingly interrupted her sleep, and is more than usually forceful in her refusal to allow him to leave her later to fight for the oppressed and disinherited.[14] There is none of this love-in-hate in the *Doon*-maiden: she has power, she refuses to surrender it, and she kills to keep it. Her murder weapon, a soft bed, is all the more insidious because it is not under male control and is not part of a rational selection plan, such as the phallic sword of the father in *Le Chevalier à l'Épée*, which kills any knight who tries to have sex with his daughter unless he is "the best knight in all the world" (vv. 752-66).

Doon's success in the ride from Southampton to Edinburgh becomes another opportunity for the *Doon*-maiden to reveal herself as a covenant-breaker. Doon plays by the rules: ten lines are devoted to a discussion of the fixing of the day, the preliminary arrangements and the proper witnessing of the test (vv. 81-90). The woman, however, does not fight fairly. When he comes to request his reward ("ses covenanz demander," v. 132), she imposes another test, quite beyond the terms of her original contract. The pride that she exhibits through all these events never leaves her. It is incorrect to say, *pace* Tobin (p. 324), that "Doon a voulu . . . guérir l'orgueil de sa femme," by abandoning her. When Doon reveals himself to his son, he says "molt est orgueilleuse ta mere" (v. 264); proud she was and proud she remains, in spite of Gaston Paris's attempts to make Doon a pride-doctor by "emending" present-tense "est" to past-tense "ert."[15]

All that has changed is her behavior, and the transformation happened over night, not during the years of her husband's absence. By marrying Doon, she has taken on a *seignor* for herself and for her land: in the world of the poet and his audience the right man is powerful enough to tame the shrew in a single night and potent enough to sire a son on the first attempt.

Such powers are not unusual in medieval texts. Kathryn Gravdal has found a dozen *pastourelles* which show overtly (and many more which simply disguise) the male belief that no matter how much they resists, women want to be raped. The women imagined by such poets fight vigorously before they are assaulted, but say thank you afterwards and ask their attackers to return, often. Gravdal has argued further that these poems are simply the translation into another social register and a different mode of expression of the attitudes of "courtly" males toward ladies of the court;[16] *Doon* preserves the aristocratic milieu and mystifies the power relations by transformations of the plot elements. The encounter takes place in a castle, not a meadow; the woman is of noble birth and not a shepherdess, and the man conquers her not by his own but by his horse's brute force. Her resistance takes the form of elaborate tests and a perilous bed rather than kicking, scratching and pleading, but once she has been forced she has also been tamed. She wants nothing more than to keep her man with her, and from here on she will do whatever he tells her whether he ever returns or

not. Each of the separate elements is different, but the sexual politics of the *Lai de Doon* are precisely those of the *pastourelle*—or rather, those of the *pastourelles* which are usually excluded from anthologies and translations.

Doon's behavior, throughout the poem, is also treated as if it were perfectly natural. He is a superior knight, but is not supernatural: "molt estoit preuz e vaillanz / sage e cortois e enprenanz" (vv. 69-70). His amorous relationship with the maiden is not in any way comparable to those found in Marie de France. The maiden does not approach him, as in *Lanval* (vv. 71ff.)[17] or *Milun* (23ff.), but rejects him. He has never seen her, so there is no *coup de foudre*, no lingering description of her anatomy to allow the audience the experience of falling vicariously in love. All that he has heard of her is that she is proud, so there is no *amor de lonh*. She and her land are appropriate goals for the efforts of a hardy, valiant, wise, courteous and adventurous knight.

His success in the trials causes general rejoicing among the men of the maiden's land. Previous successful travellers have been honored only by the lady herself (vv. 51-52), and her friendliness is only a veil for her murderous intent. Doon, however, is welcomed by all the men of the castle, great and small (vv. 97-100), and his survival after a night in the perilous chamber causes them further joy (v. 128). It is on their advice that the maiden accepts Doon as the lord of the land: he has, after all, satisfied their wish to have a proper male overlord, so it is proper that there be a reflex of the "joy of liberated captives" motif found more overtly in *Yvain* (vv. 5765ff.), *Erec* (vv. 6317ff.),[18] *Le Chevalier à l'Épée* (vv. 782ff.) and other romances in which a bold young man puts an end to socially unacceptable practices.

It seems unlikely that the intended audience of the poem was any more surprised by Doon's departure from his wife than by the *pastourelle* rapist's abandonment of his victim: the poet has created no reason for him to stay. He has done all he set out to do, and more. While it is true that many romances which now enjoy favor show a real tension at such moments, it is only because their authors have previously established strong emotional ties between their heroes and heroines, and they are interested in supporting loftier views of the knight's calling. Blandin de Cornoalha leaves his beautiful Brianda, just after he has rescued her from an enchanted sleep, because he has promised to meet his boon companion Guilhot who, as the audience has learned, is in great danger. Brianda pleads with him, and begs him not to go, saying that he cannot really love her if he is so eager to depart, but he keeps his word (vv. 1857ff.). Yvain leaves Laudine because of the fear that he may become recreant, but his desire to return to her is so great that he devotes all his chivalric talents to becoming worthy of her love. Doon experiences no tension at all. He is quite unmoved by his wife's tears and simply returns to the soldier's life and cares little about returning to her.

The offspring of the union between these two people is a picture of perfect young manhood. This is frequently the case with sons conceived on such "one time only" terms: Arthur,[19] Galahad,[20] Jaume el Conqueridor of Aragon-Catalonia.[21] Having concentrated all his procreative power in this one encounter, Doon can return to his post, confident that his newly-tamed wife will follow his instructions, and will not be one of those romance mothers who hide the glories of knighthood from their sons. He does not have to keep up communications with his lady, like Milun, and he doesn't need to have anything to do with women at all: no fear here of reproaches like those in *Lanval* (vv. 281-82) that he is too interested in attractive young squires.

The lady's maternal energy is, in fact, completely devoted to advancing her son's military career, although his successes are of course attributed to his genetic inheritance from his father. She sees to it that he learns to ride and hunt, and when she follows Doon's instructions to send him to the King of France, she provides him with abundant gold and silver. The boy, unlike his mother, does not become proud because of his wealth, but follows the proper practice of his class by spreading his money around, with the expected results: "si despendi molt largement / en la cort se fist molt amer / car il ert larger de donner" (vv. 200-02). The court life he finds is exactly as it should be. His generosity is properly repaid by the companionship of the other knights, not accepted ungratefully as in *Lanval* (vv. 21ff.). The King is not negligent or misled by envious advisers, and there is no lascivious queen to try to lead him away from the proper path or harm his career with false-accusations. In due course, he is ready to meet his father on the field of honor.

Strife between successive generations of knights is generally presented in contemporary romances as a situation which is emotionally highly charged. Most frequently, the goal of the struggle is the transfer of a woman from an older established male to a young knight. In the simplest case, a father refuses to give his daughter to anyone but the man who can kill him, as in *La Vengeance de Raguidel*;[22] this motif is often the subject of displacement, and the hero has to defeat guards left behind by a dead father to protect the girl and her inheritance from falling into unworthy hands, as in *Blandin de Cornoalha*[23] and the *Prose Erec* (pp. 67-68),[24] or to survive the assaults of a father-substitute like the enchanted sword in *Le Chevalier à l'Épée* (vv. 539-44). In *Milun* (vv. 351ff.), which is the closest contemporary analogue, the father is moved to seek out and fight his unrecognized son by his excessive jealousy of the young man's increasing reputation, for he will allow no other person to challenge his own fame as the best knight in the region. In *Doon*, although the conflict between generations is represented in a battle between father and son, the poet systematically excludes all such emotions, all Oedipal tensions, and all possibility of tragedy.

The boy is doing exactly what a young knight should do, and that coin-

cides completely with what his father has wanted him to do since the day of his conception. The two men are on opposite sides precisely because Doon specified that he should be sent to the King of France rather than to the Duke of Brittany. Nevertheless, there is no real danger because it is only a tournament, not a war. Doon fights his son because he has a strong suspicion that the young man is of his lineage, but he wants tangible proof; the son wounds the father, but his intentions are pure, and he would never have done so if he had known his opponent's identity. The reuniting of father and son is completely under the father's control and not, as in *Milun*, prompted by the son's pity for a grey-haired opponent. It is in no sense a reconciliation, for neither man has considered anything done by the other to be wrong or harmful.

Once he has met his replacement, whom he himself has engendered and tested, once he has ensured the continuity of the chivalric way of life, Doon can retire. Now he can return to his wife and her/his castle and lands and live out his life as a true *seignor*. Like Yvain, or Eric, or Jaufre, he can become a peace-loving lord who fulfils his military duties by sending out other men into the world of battle and adventure; he differs from them, in being a full generation older. This transition into civilian life is not even made problematic by the existence of another man who needs to be removed, like the husband in *Milun* (vv. 499ff.), or by any fear that the lady may need some convincing, like Laudine (vv. 6593ff.). Doon has done all that a perfect knight should do, and now he can receive his proper reward.

The works of Marie, Chrétien and many other romances reveal, after a subtle reading, the tensions within the social relations of the young men in their audiences when they show heroes doing all that they can to escape from the life of a knight through marriage, delayed for a year or two at most by their author's beliefs that such a transition should depend on the achievement of a higher moral status in their chivalric activities or on the integration of disparate personal and psychological tendencies.[25] The *Lai de Doon*, read straightforwardly for what it is and not for what it might have been if it had been written by Marie or written in Breton, gives a clearer view of the attitudes which were necessary to preserve the chivalric society of the end of the twelfth century. As such, at the very least, it gives us direct evidence of the ideology which Marie and Chrétien were trying to transform and sublimate with all their epiphenomenal concerns with passion, individual psychology and "Celtic" mystery.

The perfect knight of the poem, and, by implication, the perfectible knight in the audience, is hardy, worthy, valiant, wise, courteous and adventurous. He uses his resources in all his undertakings, whether martial or amatory. His career comes first, and though it is necessary to marry in order to continue his lineage, he spends as little time as possible with his wife and doesn't allow thoughts of her or other women to distract him from his duties. He gives up military life when he has been all that he can be,

after an honorable defeat at the hands of a younger man, not after a conspicuous success which would allow him to leap over steps in the proper knightly career path.

The perfect woman is a spunky little thing, a worthy opponent even though she fights like a woman, too much for an ordinary man to handle. She doesn't know what she wants, but if you give her what she needs, she will come around. She will be an appropriate carrier for the son you always wanted, and she will see to it that he becomes the kind of man that you want him to be without any need for involvement on your part. When the time comes, she will welcome you back with open arms and let you spend her wealth to ensure that you are popular with her vassals: after all, if you have been vigilant during your all-night watch, it's safe to rest for a while in the soft bed. If you are the right sort of man, your individual actions will be crowned with glorious success, your lord and all the other knights will treat you well—how in the world could this poem be considered "realistic"?—and then you can live happily ever after.

Despite their protests, then, the *Lai de Doon* fits rather well with the critics' definitions of the genre. It is about perfect men and women and perfect relations between them, although the "ideals" may be rather different from what the critics would acknowledge. It is perfectly attuned to a psychology which, despite its origin in social circumstances rather than any demonstrable "human nature," has endured as long as anything that might now be called archetypal. It makes a successful effort to utilize the arts of rhetoric, although modern high-cultural rhetorical critics pay rather too much attention to *descriptio, abbreviatio* and the like, and rather too little to *innuendo*. Its characters display the concern with the welfare of their community, so valued by modern readers of Marie,[26] for they act as proper representatives of their class without being constrained by force, or need, or even such abstractions as absolute loyalty: like true twelfth-century individualists, they are shown to us doing what they do of their own free will. The poem might even be called "elegant," in the way that a mathematical proof is elegant: the poet makes his demonstration by building, with as little complexity as possible, on assumptions which are treated as axiomatic. His success should be measured by the length of time those assumptions have gone unchallenged.

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1. Prudence Mary O'Hara Tobin, ed., *Les lais anonymes des XIIe-et XIIIe-siècles: Edition critique de quelques lais breton* (Geneva: Droz, 1970), pp. 324-31.

2. Mortimer J. Donovan, *The Breton Lay: A Guide to Varieties* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 73.

3. Jean-Claude Aubailly, *La fée et le chevalier: Essai de mythanalyse de quelques lais féeriques des XII^e et XIII^e siècles* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1986), p. 11.

4. Gaston Paris, "Lais inédits," *Romania* 8 (1979): 59.

5. There is still much work to be done in several fields. Euripides's *Orestes* and *Children of Heracles* have not yet overcome Aristotle's definition of "tragedy" grounded in *Oedipus*; "silver" Latin epic studies still struggle against Virgilian standards; and "chanson de geste" and "romance" are still often treated as synonyms for the Oxford *Roland* and five of Chrétien's poems, respectively.

6. This modern predilection is the root cause of the current interest in medieval texts which subtly criticize the established social order and has led to the re-canonization of Chrétien and Marie as protestant saints.

7. The Provençal *Blandin de Cornoalha*, edited as *Blandin de Cornouaille*, ed. C.H.M. Van Der Horst (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), which relates a typical romance plot without any touches of individual poetic genius, clearly identifies these qualities as the essential ingredients of a generic romance:

> En non de Dieu commenzeray
> Un bel dictat, et retrayrai
> D'amors & de cavalaria,
> E d'una francha compagnia
> Che van far dos cavaliers,
> De Cornoalha bons guerriers. (vv. 1-6)

8. Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier de la Charrette*, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1970).

9. *Two Old French Gauvain Romances: Le Chevalier à l'Épée and La Mule Sans Frein*, ed. R.C. Johnston and D.D.R. Owen (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1972).

10. "Par ailleurs, Doon bénéficie d'une sorte de prescience inexpliquée qui lui interdit de se coucher, la nuit, dans le lit périlleux"; François Suard, "Le fils dans les lais anonymes," in *Le recit bref au moyen âge*, ed. Danielle Buschinger (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1979), pp. 58-59.

11. Gaston Paris, "Lais inédits," *Romania* 8 (1879): 60.

12. *La Vengeance de Raguidel*, vol. 2 of Raoul de Houdenc, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Mathias Friedwagner (Halle, 1909; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1975).

13. Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1978): " 'Non, sire? Et se je vos oci?' / 'Dame, la vostre grant merci, / que ja ne m'an orroiz dire el' " (vv. 1982-84).

14. *Jaufré: Roman arthurien de XIII^e siècle en vers proveçaux*, ed. Clovis Brune (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1943), vv. 3603-07 and 8099-108.

15. Paris, p. 64; he prints "ert" in his text (v. 266), notes that the MS reads "est," in a footnote, but offers no explanation for his "correction."

16. Kathryn Gravdal, "Camouflaging Rape: The Rhetoric of Sexual Violence in the Medieval Pastourelle," *Romanic Review* 76 (1985): 361-73; esp. 364-65, 370-71.

17. Marie de France, *Lais*, ed. A. Ewert (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978).

18. Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec et Enide*, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1978).

19. *The Historia Regum Brittaniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Acton Griscom (London: Longmans, 1929), VIII, xix, p. 426.

20. *Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac*, part 3, pp. 110-11, vol. 5 of *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (Washington: Carnegie Institute, 1912).

21. Bernat Desclot, *Llibre del Rei En Pere*, chapter 4, in *Les Quatre Grans Cròniques*, ed. Ferran Soldevila (Barcelona: Editorial Selecta, 1971).

22. In the final major episode of the poem, Gawain fights and kills this man,

named Guengasouin, but yields his prize to the man she loves, his companion in arms Yder.

23. Blandin must fight ten armed knights (vv. 1174ff.) and then three monstrous creatures (vv. 1440ff.) who have all been left by Brianda's father (vv. 1317-19).

24. *Erec: Roman arthurien en prose*, ed. Cedric E. Pickford, 2nd. ed. (Geneva: Droz, 1968).

25. For a recent and insightful discussion of the social realities visible behind Marie's poem, see Don A. Monson, "L'Idéologie du lai de Lanval," *Le Moyen Age* 93 (1987): 349-72.

26. Glyn S. Burgess, *The Lais of Marie de France* (University of Georgia Press, 1987), p. 180.